

February 10, 2023

Dear Members of the Human Services Committee of Connecticut General Assembly:

My name is Joanna Chen from New Haven, CT, and I stand in support of HB 6616: An Act Concerning Expansion Of Husky Health Benefits To Those Ineligible Due To Immigration Status. Expanding access to HUSKY regardless of immigration status is an important step in ensuring our immigrant community has access to the healthcare we need. But our work doesn't end with expanding access up to age 26; we need to open access to HUSKY and healthcare to all immigrants of any age. If Connecticut wants a future that includes healthy families and a stable, thriving and growing workforce that is ready to meet the needs of our future, Connecticut must ensure that these individuals have access to health coverage.

Universal Healthcare is something I'm deeply passionate about, as there was a period of time when I was sick, and my family and I didn't have healthcare. During that time, I could barely eat or talk. My whole body hurt, and I was often found lying on my bathroom floor clutching at my stomach. I was scared to go to the doctors because I knew we didn't have insurance. However, it came to a point where I could no longer bare the pain and was rushed to urgent care. As of today, that bill for the hospital visit still has not been fully paid off, despite our efforts, causing my family and me a monumental amount of stress.

Having healthcare would ensure the basic human right for everyone. No one deserves to suffer through pain just because they can't afford to see a doctor. Expand Connecticut's HUSKY coverage and help fight the fight for universal healthcare coverage.

I support **HB 6616** and I ask the committee to support and pass this legislation. Looking forward, I ask the committee to work towards opening access to all immigrants regardless of age.

Thank you for your time,

Joanna Chen